

AMERICAN TEA

The Shore Community's "Big Day Out"

There are a few stories within the community attempting to explain the beginnings of the American Tea. However here we provide the facts provided by the Shore Archives Department, Shore Association and our Headmaster.

According to the Shorter Oxford Dictionary an American Tea is defined as *"a social function for raising funds, to which guests contribute by bringing or by buying food and drink"*.

The first American Tea ("bring a gift, buy a gift") was held on 16 November 1936 under the auspices of the Ladies' Committee of the SCEGS Association and made £68/3/6 which went into the SCEGS Jubilee Fund. In 1937 the event was a Garden Fete and the next recorded American Tea was in November 1940, which was organized by Mrs L C Robson, President of the Auxiliary, Mrs O R Cormack, Secretary and Mrs Donald Esplin, Treasurer. Boys from the School conducted tours of School buildings and showed guests the view from the tower; afternoon tea was served in the Dining Hall. The Tea made a profit of £79/13/10 which went to the Lord Mayor's Patriotic Fund to supply comforts for the men of the Merchant Navy.

In the 1930's all things American were in vogue in Sydney (think Hollywood and the jazz scene) prior to this there were often, although not annually, fundraising events held by the Shore community and the Sydney social scene was more traditional and British. Various cake stalls and events raised funds for many good causes. During the war years of WW1 and WW2 it was common for funds raised by the Shore community to go towards the war effort however, as you may read here, it was just as commonly used to support the education of the boys at Shore at other times.

In 1942 and 1943 the profits of the American Tea went to the Legacy War Orphans' Appeal, in 1944 to the Gowrie Trust (Scholarship) Fund and in 1945 towards the new School Hall. The War Memorial Hall Fund continued to receive proceeds from the Tea until its opening in 1954. Additionally in 1949 funds went towards the cost of two tennis courts put down by the then Scout Hall (basketball courts have since replaced those tennis courts) and in 1950, when £476/1/2 was raised, the Library and the Cricket Club were also beneficiaries and seats for around the School Ground were purchased.

Today the American Tea, usually held annually on the first Friday in September, has evolved into a high spirited community event where both boys and parents are encouraged to contribute to the day. They do so in a multitude of ways from tennis and cooking days to movie nights and mother's day stalls. The key has always been, and will continue to be, helping out, contributing and enjoying being a part of a great community.

Funds raised from the American Tea go towards the Shore Association fundraising effort. "The Tea" is the School's major fundraising activity along with the Northbridge BBQ & canteen, which also contributes to the funds raised. Funds raised are distributed throughout the School on an annual basis for:

- Equipment to enhance the school environment for all boys and girls
- Provision of Bursaries, Exhibitions and Scholarships for the boys